Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-16 (canceled).

17.   (previously presented) A method for preserving configuration data during firmware modification, said method comprising:

a)   establishing a direct serial connection between a firmware device and a download computing device;

b)   establishing a network connection between said download computing device, a web-based device administration utility on a web server and said firmware device;

c)   uploading firmware configuration data, over said network connection, from an existing firmware structure in said firmware device to said web server using said web-based administration utility, wherein said web-based administration utility performs said uploading by pulling data from said existing firmware structure without loading any software onto said firmware device;

d)   storing said firmware configuration data on said web server;

e)   erasing firmware, including said firmware configuration data, from said firmware device;

f)   loading a new firmware structure from said download computing device to said firmware device over said direct serial connection;

g)   loading said firmware configuration data from said web server to said

firmware device over said network connection.

18.   (currently amended) A method as described in claim 0 17 further comprising

converting said configuration data to a format compatible with said new

firmware structure using said web-based device administration utility on said

web server prior to said loading said firmware configuration data.

19.   (currently amended) A method as described in claim 0 17 further comprising

modifying said configuration data with said web server prior to said loading

said firmware configuration data.

20.   (currently amended) A method as described in claim 0 17 further comprising

querying network elements to ascertain additional configuration data needed

by said new firmware structure.

21.   (currently amended) A method as described in claim 19 20 further comprising

combining said additional configuration data with said configuration data

using said web-based device administration utility on said web server prior to

said loading said firmware configuration data.

22. (previously presented) A system for preserving configuration data during firmware

modification, said system comprising:

a)   a firmware device;

b)   a download computing device;

c)   a web-based device administration utility on a web server;

d)   a direct serial connection between said firmware device and said download

computing device;

e)   a network connection between said download computing device, said web-

based device administration utility on a web server and said firmware device;

f)   an uploader for uploading firmware configuration data, over said network

connection, from an existing firmware structure in said firmware device to said

web server using said web-based administration utility, wherein said web-based

administration utility performs said uploading by pulling data from said existing

firmware structure without loading any software onto said firmware device;

g)   storage, on said web server, for storing said firmware configuration;

h)   an eraser process for erasing firmware, including said firmware configuration

data, from said firmware device;

i)   a firmware loader for loading a new firmware structure from said download

computing device to said firmware device over said direct serial connection

wherein said firmware loader performs said loading by pushing data to said

firmware device without loading any software onto said firmware device;

j)   a configuration loader for loading said firmware configuration data from said

web server to said firmware device over said network connection wherein said

configuration loader performs said loading by pushing data to said firmware

device without loading any software onto said firmware device.

23. (currently amended) A system as described in claim ~~21~~ 22 further comprising a

converter for converting said configuration data to a format compatible with

said new firmware structure using said web-based device administration

utility on said web server prior to said loading said firmware configuration

data.

24. (currently amended) A system as described in claim ~~21~~ 22 further comprising a

modifier for modifying said configuration data with said web server prior to

said loading said firmware configuration data.

25. (currently amended) A system as described in claim ~~21~~ 22 further comprising a

query process for querying network elements to ascertain additional

configuration data needed by said new firmware structure.

26. (currently amended) A system as described in claim ~~24~~ 25 further comprising a

combiner for combining said additional configuration data with said

configuration data using said web-based device administration utility on said

web server prior to said loading said firmware configuration data.